

Children's liturgy –Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Preparation of the worship space

Colour: green

Props: Coloured paper to make invitations and RSVPs, colouring pens and pencils.

Song suggestions: Gather us in (475, Laudate)

Welcome: Today we hear a story about a king who invites lots of different people to the wedding of his son. Let's also think a bit about what God invites us to do in our lives today.

Opening prayer: God of welcome, you invite us to follow in your ways and enter into your kingdom. May we answer your call. Amen.

First reading (optional): Isaiah 25:6-10

Psalm: Psalm 22. R. v.6

Gospel acclamation: everyone stands and sings the acclamation together. Suggestions include: 'Halle, halle, halle' (Caribbean) from 'Sing With the World', Alison Adam & John Bell; 'Alleluia' (Zimbabwe), Abraham Maraire Publications, WCC & GIA; 'Celtic Alleluia' (traditional); 'Alleluia! Raise the Gospel' from 'Go Before Us', Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications.

Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

Today Jesus tells us another parable to try and explain what the kingdom of heaven is like.

The king's son is getting married. He invites lots of people to the party but when the day comes and the king sends out his servants to fetch the people they do not come. He tries again, but the people just aren't interested in coming.

How do you think the king feels about this? What does he do next?

The king sends out his servants to stand in the middle of the street and invite everyone they can find to the wedding. So they do, and the wedding hall is filled with guests.

Have you ever been to a wedding? Or another big party or celebration? What was it like? Did you have to do anything beforehand to get ready to go to the wedding/party?

When we go to a wedding, or any party, we tell the person who invited us that we are coming. We get out our best clothes and make sure we are clean and tidy. We buy a present and write the card. Can you think of anything else that we do to get ready for a party?

The king in Jesus' story represents God and the wedding is the kingdom of heaven. What do you think that Jesus was trying to tell us with this story?

We are all invited by God to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. It is a place where everyone is welcome. But we have to be ready to go.

How do you think we can answer God's invitation and get ready for the kingdom of heaven?

We can listen to God's word and try to follow what God asks us to do in our lives. What do you think God asks us to do?

God asks us to be kind, to be welcoming and invite others to share in what we have, to bring peace, to stand up for what is right, to care for and respect one another and to love our neighbour, wherever they are in the world.

Can you think of anything else that God asks us to do?

By answering God's invitation and being kind and generous, welcoming and fair, by loving our neighbour, we can help to reflect God's kingdom here on earth. We will help other people to see that we care for everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from, and the world will become a better, fairer place for all people to live.

Let's all try really hard this week to listen to what God wants from us and to say yes to that invitation in the way we behave in the coming week.

You could give the children an example from your own life eg: I think God is inviting me to be more generous and share what I have. I will say yes to that invitation by sharing the vegetables from my allotment with my elderly neighbour/sharing some of my time volunteering to help others/taking my old clothes to the charity shop etc.

How does God want you to live your life? And how will you answer that invitation this week?

Intercessions You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.

We pray together to God who welcomes everyone:

We pray for the Church throughout the world: that it may live out God's invitation of welcome and love for all. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for world leaders: that they may be guided to make decisions for the good of all people, especially those who are poor. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may live our lives as God asks us to, with respect and care for all people and love for our neighbours throughout the world. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God who calls us, strengthen and help us as we try to say yes to your invitation to be with you, by living lives of sharing, kindness, respect and love. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Ask the children to colour in the accompanying optional illustration and to fill in both the invitation (God invites me to...) and the RSVP (I am willing to...)

Give the children pieces of coloured paper to make invitations. Get them to decorate them and write what they think God is inviting them to do. Then, on the back or on a separate piece of paper get them to make an RSVP and to write or draw how they will answer God's invitation in their lives.

Ask the children to go home and share all that they have heard and thought about today. Ask them to spend some time quietly in prayer in the coming week, trying to listen to what God is inviting them to do. Ask them to try to say yes to that invitation in the way they behave in the coming week.